

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

The drawings were objected to for containing a foreign language. Accordingly, the drawings have been corrected by amendment herein as shown on the enclosed replacement sheets in which all instances of the foreign language have been removed or replaced with English. Thus, the objection has been obviated.

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,587,684 to Hsu et al. (hereinafter "Hsu") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,351,442 to Tagawa et al. (hereinafter "Tagawa") and in further view of applicants admission of prior art (hereinafter "AAPA"). The rejection is moot in view of the following.

The following statement is made for the purpose of establishing common ownership under 35 U.S.C. 103(c) (see MPEP § 706.02(l)(2) paragraph II): *The present application and the Tagawa patent were, at the time the invention of the present application was made, owned by or subject to an obligation of assignment to Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd.* All the claims of the present application were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) using the Hsu patent in view of the Tagawa patent and in further view of AAPA, wherein the Hsu patent is only available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f), and/or (g). Thus, the Tagawa patent is disqualified from being used in a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) against the claims of the present application, rendering the present rejection moot.

Enclosed herewith is an information disclosure statement (IDS) that includes a copy of EP 0962929 A2 (hereinafter "EP '929"), a European patent application which corresponds to the Tagawa patent. The earliest effective date of the EP '929 reference as a publication under 35 U.S.C. 102 is December 8, 1999. The instant application claims foreign priority based on Japanese Patent Application No. Hei. 11-23425, filed on August 20, 1999, which predates the EP '929 reference. The Examiner has already acknowledge receipt of the certified copy of the priority document. A verified translation of this reference is enclosed herewith for the purpose of disqualifying the EP '929 reference as prior art.

Appl. No. 09/642,622
Amdt. Dated February 26, 2004
Reply to Office action of October 31, 2003

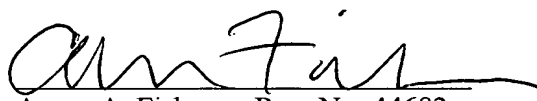
In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 32893.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: February 27, 2004